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2. *Details of a Journey through parts of the Salado Valley and across some of the Argentine Provinces.* By THOS. J. HUTCHINSON, H. M. Consul, Rosario.

THIS Paper contains an account, in very minute detail, of a journey performed by Mr. Hutchinson through the Argentine provinces, and especially through the valley of the river Salado. It gives the distances from place to place with more exactness perhaps than has been done hitherto, and is accompanied by an excellent map, by Dr. Burmeister, of Buenos Ayres, which, although founded on those drawn by Mr. Arrowsmith for Captain FitzRoy's and Sir Woodbine Parish's works, contains some more recent data and corrections by Mr. Hutchinson himself. The whole country, from the mouth of the Plata to Diamante in Entre Rios, is described as flat; and the aspect of the undulating land of the Entre Rios province is described as very pleasing from the contrast it offers to the level region. The Salado is called the Northern Salado River, to distinguish it from the southern stream of the same name, which flows through the province of Buenos Ayres. Its mouth lies between Diamante and Santa Fé, in s. lat. $31^{\circ} 38' 34''$; w. long. $60^{\circ} 39' 40''$. Little or nothing was known of it previous to its exploration by Captain Page, of the U. S. Navy, about ten years ago, who ascended it in a small steamer to a point 340 miles from its mouth. The river has since been more carefully examined by Mr. John Coghlan, civil engineer at Buenos Ayres, who has pronounced on the possibility of its navigability to a distance of nearly 1000 miles above Santa Fé. The line of railroad from Rosario to Cordova, projected by Mr. Wheelwright, is carefully laid down upon the map; and Mr. Hutchinson (who holds the post of H.M. Consul at Rosario, and is therefore a most competent person to form an opinion upon such a subject) bears the strongest testimony to its great and undoubted importance to the future prospects of the whole of that republic. The port of Rosario (he says) is the natural outlet for eleven out of the fourteen provinces into which the Argentine Republic is divided; and the carrying trade, effected by bullock-carts, between the city and the interior, amounts to nearly 18,000 tons per year.

Mr. WHEELWRIGHT said that the communication from Consul Hutchinson reminded him that a new pass had been discovered and examined in the Cordillera of the Andes, which might perhaps be found more practicable than the one he had explored, with reference to an interoceanic communication, in the

latitude of Atacama in 1855. The elevations to be overcome in the new pass appear lower than anything he had obtained in the north. The only obstacle which presented itself to his mind in relation to it was the snow—it being in the latitude of 35° s., whereas the Pass of San Francisco is in 27° s., and for nine consecutive years passengers had passed and repassed without interruption. He came to the conclusion, from this circumstance, that the northern pass might be found practicable for locomotive power, and the surveys he had made induced the conviction that practical gradients could be obtained. Such has been the result; and although a longer route and far to the north, its freedom from blocking snows was a powerful argument in its favour. It would certainly be most desirable that a transandine communication should embrace Santiago, the seat of government in Chile, and the commercial capital Valparaiso, both connected by a railway, which extends to Curico, from 80 to 100 miles south of Santiago, and the apparent starting-point through the Pass of the Andes. Should the statements prove true (and they are doubtless entitled to credit), and no obstacle interpose, this route would obtain a decided preference over that of the north. Should this be the case, the projected railway from Cordova northward to Horqueta, instead of bending westward, as originally proposed, towards the Cordillera, would continue its northerly course through Tucuman, Salta, Jujuy, and finally enter Bolivia, or what was formerly Upper Peru, and restore its foreign commerce and trade to Buenos Ayres; but instead of a journey of three or four months, it would, through railway facilities, be accomplished in as many days. Should the southern pass be found practicable, it would take the Rosario and Cordova line of railway from the valley of the La Plata, and continue it on to the Villa Nueva station, about 160 miles, and at this point diverge and take a western direction through the province of San Luis to Mendoza, from thence seek the Cordillera Pass, and unite on the Great Southern Line, which he (Mr. Wheelwright) projected in 1842, and which has recently reached Curico, the probable junction of this interoceanic communication. The Cordova Railway is already in progress. It has been taken up in England by Mr. Thomas Brassey, who is thoroughly capable of appreciating this great undertaking, which, when carried out, will embrace in trunk-lines 3000 miles of railway.

The PRESIDENT said he wished before adjourning the Meeting to call attention to the beautiful paintings of the Zambesi Falls, by Mr. Baines, the artist who accompanied Dr. Livingstone in his travels. Mr. Baines had sent home a vast number of pictorial illustrations; and he hoped that, under the patronage of the Society, some publisher might be induced to bring out a selection of them in coloured lithography.

Twelfth Meeting (ANNIVERSARY), 1 P.M., May 23rd, 1864.

SIR RODERICK I. MURCHISON, K.C.B., PRESIDENT, in the Chair.

THE SECRETARY read the minutes of the previous Annual Meeting, and also the Regulations for the conduct of the present one; after which Dr. Webster and Mr. Arrowsmith were appointed scrutineers for the ballot by the President.

Captain R. R. Hutchinson; John W. Bone, B.A.; John Cameron; John W. Cannon; F. T. Jeyes, and Edward Warner, M.P., Esqrs.,